

NOSTALGIA

Listen, they've got me in this B movie, part of a revival of the double feature and the neighborhood movie house, pictures changing on Wednesdays and Sundays. They took me right off the street and said I could be either a local politician or a movie star, so I picked the movies, partly because I always wanted to be a little rich and a little famous and well ... you never know, that's the way a lot of the big ones got started. Look, it's better than being a college professor or a streetcar conductor, which they told me was the choice they gave to lots of other people. So I guess I'm lucky. They also said they're going to revive the family — five, maybe ten kids, and no divorce. They only let me listen to the radio. Television is going to be a thing of the past, they say. They're going to take things like antibiotics out of the drug stores and build more churches. They said Madonna's going to get her tits caught in a ringer. Things like that. And oh, steak's going to be 15 cents a pound again. Maybe it's a good deal, I don't know, getting in on the ground floor and all. Right now I'm in an undisclosed place and you can't write to me, but look for me in the pics, I think you'll be surprised to see me in a ten-gallon hat. Take care.

TAKING CARE

My right foot makes the slightest jerk to the right when I walk, a small articulation of myself, telling, but of what I don't know. Things get taken care of below the level of consciousness — the near-infinity of cells and molecules, each with its own fine signature we'd no doubt discover if we could scale down our amplitude and enter ourselves, or other selves, those swarming billions, say, of bacteria guarding the colon. Vast galaxies of particles holding it all together in the midnight hush and bustle of our traffic. Nothing to explain

it, the jerking foot I can't control.
No matter how hard I try, the will won't
go that deep, but things get taken care of
there, in the murmurous estuaries.

— Peter Desy

Columbus OH

JAYWALKING THE AIRWAVES

It's less easy to read between the lines on TV
because they rarely shut up
but the other night I caught a gem on one of those
objective PBS news programs.

Summing up the week, a reporter from The Wall Street
Journal says, "450,000 new jobs created this quarter."
And the host of the show asks, "What kind of jobs
are they? Are they good jobs? Or are they McDonalds?"

and there is silence on the airways

"Well," Mr. Wall Street Journal says, blushing, "50
percent are in the service sector ... but 50 percent
are in manufacturing."

and there is silence on the airwaves

"But aren't 20 percent of those temporary jobs?"
another reporter asks

"Yes, they are," Mr. Wall Street Journal says,
blushing again

and there is silence on the airways

and there is more silence on the airways
and no one says what they are all thinking:

There are not 450,000 new jobs
There are 300,000 new wage slaves

Every man is free to jaywalk the truth
but it seems to me the man in power
should consider treating better the young
and the poor
Otherwise some day when he is old and helpless
he will be at the mercy of like-minded men.

What I mean is this: the same free-spirited compulsion
or calculated selfishness that can make one man want
to jaywalk
can make another no lesser, no greater man
want to run his ass over